



**Air Quality Bureau
Iowa DNR
7900 Hickman Road Suite 1
Urbandale, Iowa 50322**



Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Where To Find Help

Open Burning Rules

For questions or copies of Iowa's open burning rules, contact:

Clark Ott at 515-281-4899, COtt@max.state.ia.us

Fire Training and Asbestos

For training fire forms and asbestos questions, contact:

Marion Burnside at 515-281-8443,

MBurnsi@max.state.ia.us

Clark Ott at 515-281-4899,

COtt@max.state.ia.us

or Christine Paulson at 515-242-5154,

CPaulso@max.state.ia.us

Material Recycling

For more information on material recycling, contact:

DNR Waste Management Assistance Division at 515-281-8176

Or Visit Us on the Web

www.state.ia.us/epd

**Iowa's Clean Air:
Ignore it and it will go away.**

OPEN BURNING

Iowa Rules for Better Burning

Open burning is more than a mere nuisance — it's a tradition that is outdated, unhealthy, poses unnecessary risk and is illegal in many Iowa communities.

Although many options exist for eliminating the backyard burning of residential waste, such as composting and municipal solid waste pickup, many Iowans continue their burning habits.

Pollutants Blowin' in the Wind

According to a 1982 report from DNR forerunner, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), approximately one in every six Iowans is susceptible to leaf smoke and other harmful pollutants that are emitted into the air when materials are burned. These potent toxins can irritate sensitive tissues and contribute to several health risks, including cancer.

For example, of one of the biggest health risks posed to Iowans occurred in 1975 when hospital admissions for respiratory conditions were correlated with air quality violations caused by leaf-burning in Des Moines. As a result, a leaf burning ban was enacted in Des Moines and surrounding communities.

An Unhealthy Tradition

Open burning can create smoky conditions with air pollution levels much higher than emissions from cars and industry combined, especially when autumn thermal inversions keep the smoke close to the ground. It can expose even small communities to high air pollution concentrations for extended periods. In other words, open burning occurs at ground level, usually during beautiful fall weather, exposing many Iowans who are out-of-doors to its harmful pollutants.

Smoke from leaf and other waste combustion contains carbon monoxide and other chemicals such as benzo



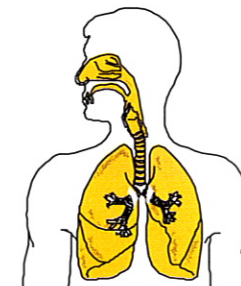
This photo was taken in March 1973 in Windsor Heights, before the open burning ban in Des Moines and surrounding communities was enacted.

(a) pyrene. These chemicals produce a visible smoke composed of tiny particles that bypass respiratory defenses, penetrate the deepest portions of the lungs and become imbedded there.

Particulate matter in the lungs can cause an increase of mucous in the airways and contribute to constriction of the airways or asthmatic reactions. A decrease in lung capacity can be incapacitating or even life threatening for the severely ill and those with respiratory problems. It can also pose additional risks for Iowans with decreased lung capacity due to emphysema, lung scarring or other ailments.

Who's at Risk?

The groups of Iowans who should be most concerned about open burning include: older Iowans, children, those with existing respiratory and cardiovascular diseases such as asthma, bronchitis and heart disease and healthy young adults who exercise out-of-doors and therefore breathe larger volumes of air.



Symptoms

Common symptoms include coughing, wheezing, chest pain and shortness of breath and can occur several days after exposure.

Burning Exemptions

Although open burning is not recommended and state law prohibits some forms of open burning, there are several rule exemptions. The exemptions are highlighted below and apply unless further restricted by local ordinances. Be sure to consult your local government authorities before burning.

The exemptions do not apply in Cedar Rapids, Marion, Hiawatha, Council Bluffs, Carter Lake, Des Moines, West Des Moines, Clive, Windsor Heights, Urbandale and Pleasant Hill except for recreational fires, training fires and disaster waste fires during official periods of community disaster.

Exemptions also exclude the burning of tires. **Tires cannot be open burned in Iowa under any circumstances.**

Trees and Trimmings

Local government entities can burn trees and tree trimmings in fenced in burning sites with controlled access.

Burning must be conducted on a regularly scheduled, supervised basis and conducted when weather conditions are favorable with respect to surrounding property.

Burn areas must be at least one-quarter mile*1 from any inhabited building. If the burning causes air pollution problems, the DNR may require the burn site to be relocated.

Landscape Waste

Landscape waste can be burned if wastes originate on the premises. Burning waste from grubbing, land clearing and construction operations is limited to areas at least one-

quarter mile from buildings inhabited by those other than land owners or the tenant who is conducting the burning.

Residential Waste

Residential wastes can be burned at dwellings of four family units or less, unless more stringent local ordinances exist.

Disaster Rubbish

Landscape waste and rubbish may be burned when a community officially has been declared a disaster area.

Training Fires

Legitimate training fires for purposes of training public and industrial employees in firefighting techniques is allowed if a written notification is **postmarked** or delivered at least 10 working days to DNR's asbestos coordinator before the action begins. Notifications include completion of a demolition/renovation form for purposes of the National Emission Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutant (NESHAP) regulations to prevent asbestos emissions.

All suspect asbestos containing materials must be tested and test-positive materials removed before the fire. Asphalt shingles may be burned in training fires provided testing results indicate none of the layers of shingles contain asbestos.

Fire departments may conduct no more than two training fires per calendar year where asphalt roofing has not been removed provided testing proves the shingles are asbestos free.



When burning landscape waste, it's best to keep the fire in a controlled and well-supervised environment. Other alternatives to burning are preferred.



*1,2: Waiver possible for areas not meeting quarter mile distance. Contact DNR for details.

Paper or Plastic Pesticide Containers and Seed Corn Bags

Paper or plastic pesticide containers and seed corn bags may be burned by farm operations if they originate on-site. Pesticide containers may not be burned if they contained organic forms of beryllium, selenium, mercury, lead, cadmium or arsenic.

Burning must take place at least one-quarter mile from any inhabited building, livestock and wildlife areas or water source. Only one day's accumulation or 50 pounds, whichever is less, may be burned.

Agricultural Structures

Barns, machine sheds, storage cribs and animal confinement buildings used in conjunction with crop production, livestock or poultry raising and feeding operations may be burned on the premises.

Before burning, all chemicals and asphalt shingles must be removed. In cities and towns, burning must take place at least one-quarter mile*2 from buildings inhabited by those other than land owners or the tenant who is conducting the burning. The local fire department must be notified.

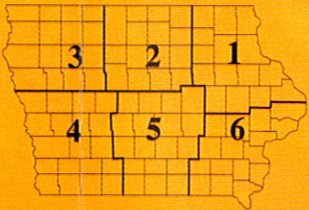
Alternatives to Burning

Recycling is preferable to burning. It is important to recognize that composting, mulching, chipping and municipal recycling or disposal are safer and healthier alternatives to burning waste and can save money.



Composting is simple, inexpensive and a great additive to lawns and gardens.

To find out about the ordinances in your area or to report burning violations or nuisances, contact your local DNR Environmental Protection Division field office.



Region 1	Manchester	319-927-2640
Region 2	Mason City	515-424-4073
Region 3	Spencer	712-262-4177
Region 4	Atlantic	712-243-1934
Region 5	Des Moines	515-281-9069
Region 6	Washington	319-653-2135

Policies and statements in this brochure are intended solely as guidance and cannot be used to bind the agency and is not a substitute for reading applicable rules.